United Nations A/66/PV.1

General Assembly

Sixty-sixth session

Official Records

1st plenary meeting
Tuesday, 13 September 2011, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Al-Nasser ..... (Qatar)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening of the session by the President of the General Assembly

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I declare open the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

Statement by the President

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my great honour to address members today as President of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his commitment to the Organization and his strong leadership on the complex and difficult issues faced by the United Nations.

Throughout this session, I will be strongly committed to conducting my responsibilities in close cooperation with Mr. Ban Ki-moon, with whom I have a strong and productive relationship. Mr. Ban Ki-moon has taken the initiative to organize a series of very important high-level meetings over the next two weeks that will touch on many of the urgent issues of our time. I extend my best wishes for their success.

I would also like to express sincere gratitude to my predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session, as well as to his team. Mr. Deiss has successfully moved forward important issues on the Assembly's agenda. I intend to build on the remarkable achievements during his mandate, including his efforts to strengthen the global governance architecture.

(*spoke in English*)

We come together at a critical juncture in the history of nations. People across the globe are questioning their systems of governance — no longer afraid to ask for what they deserve — and are actively seeking change. The environment is reacting to human mistreatment, striking back with seemingly endless natural disasters, with their ensuing humanitarian crises. The world economy is facing the most serious financial crisis since the Great Depression, threatening to destabilize livelihoods and undermining our global efforts for growth and prosperity. Oppressed people, as well as those living under foreign occupation, are yearning to be free.

An increasingly interdependent world is forcing us to rethink the way we do business at the United Nations. Future generations will hold us accountable for how we respond to those critical issues. The sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly is therefore our opportunity to define our place in this decisive moment in history. This is our opportunity to prove that we, the international community, have the courage, wisdom and tenacity to seek creative and visionary solutions, that we have learned the lessons of the past and that, when faced with those few who choose force and brutality, we choose peace, human rights and democracy.

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As President of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, I am deeply committed to working with every member to build bridges for a united global partnership. Strong collaboration and consensus-building will be essential in order to successfully move forward the Assembly's agenda at this session. Our success will also require enhancing South-South and triangular cooperation, as well as dialogue among civilizations and engagement with all major stakeholders, so as to help ensure inclusive and sustainable solutions that are in accordance with international law. My efforts will be supported by a highly competent team led by talented Qatari diplomats, whom I have selected with care and attention, and which reflects the very diversity in the Hall.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

The agenda for the sixty-sixth session is significant and rich. Moving forward the myriad issues before us will require hard work, integrity and partnership. I have identified four main areas of focus that I believe will help frame our work during this session.

The first area is the peaceful settlement of disputes. History has shown that settlements arrived at through peaceful means, including those brokered through mediation efforts, provide the most cost-effective and long-lasting solution for disputes. In today's world, the need to find peaceful resolutions to disputes has become more relevant and urgent than ever. For that reason, I have suggested the theme "The role of mediation in the settlement of disputes" for this year's general debate. Of course, this theme has a broad and multifaceted nature. I expect Member States to touch upon different aspects of this matter based their own experiences and perspectives.

In the past few years, we have seen momentum within the United Nations and in many regions with regard to mediation efforts and other tools for achieving peaceful solutions. It is my intention to actively pursue that issue during the sixty-sixth session, with a view not only to continuing previous work but also to increasing that momentum. It is my view that the General Assembly should, through its revitalization, become more engaged and empowered on mediation issues so that it can fulfil its role as the world's pre-eminent peacemaker at this major junction in international relations.

The second key priority area this year is United Nations reform and revitalization. The Organization is built on strong foundations, but its institutions were designed in the post-Second World War era. Today, the world is much more interdependent, complex and fast-paced. Change is essential in the cycle of life. There is no shame in recognizing that, after six decades, the Organization needs reform. To remain relevant and legitimate the United Nations must adapt itself in order to meet the current global challenges.

At this session, let us revitalize the work of the Assembly so that it retains the necessary political power and remains efficient, effective and representative. Supporting the Assembly in responding at an early stage to emerging situations of common concern to the international community is particularly important. To remain legitimate it is also important that there be strong political will to implement the previous resolutions and decisions of the Assembly. Let us build on previous efforts to reform the Security Council and, harnessing the collective will of the membership, let us further advance such efforts.

Let us foster stronger interaction and genuine balance among the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council in dealing with issues of peace and security, while respecting their respective mandates established by the Charter. Let us continue to ensure interaction between the General Assembly and civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

By giving the United Nations the attention that it deserves, we will ensure that it preserves its rightful place as the centre of global decision-making and as the world's pre-eminent forum for international peace and security. That is the responsibility of Member States. That is our responsibility. I call on each member to help achieve that goal.

The third priority area this session is improving disaster prevention and response. Recently, we have experienced an unprecedented surge in natural and man-made disasters. The Earth's temperature is rising; tectonic plates are shifting; and lands are drying up. Populations across the world are experiencing increased vulnerability, food insecurity and health and education crises. To address those critical issues, we must enhance cooperation among the various actors. We must invest in preparedness and take forward our

efforts to reduce the threat of and vulnerability to natural hazards.

One way of achieving that goal is to focus more on building the capacities of vulnerable regions in order to make them more capable and self-reliant, not acting only in the aftermath of disasters. We must provide full moral and financial support to help restore peace and security in Somalia, where the people face starvation and a humanitarian disaster on an unimaginable scale. I will do my utmost to focus the attention of the General Assembly on that unfolding crisis.

We must recognize that humanitarian issues are also development issues, and that our success in protecting against natural hazards will have a direct impact on our ability to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). I am committed to working with each Member State to strengthen our response efforts and to become more coordinated and holistic in our approach.

The fourth focus area is sustainable development and global prosperity. This area is also a key pillar of the Secretary-General's work. This year will be vital in pushing forward the sustainable development agenda. The High-level Meeting on Desertification, to be held next week, will give momentum to the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and the upcoming tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, to be held in the Republic of Korea.

The Rio+20 meeting in June will be a unique opportunity for the international community to recommit to sustainable development, the eradication of poverty and the achievement of the MDGs. I am committed to actively participating in the Conference preparations, with a view to continuing and maintaining an open and transparent dialogue on its objectives and themes. I am fully confident that all 193 Members want Rio+20 to be forward-looking, to build on past experiences, and to reaffirm the balance among the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development, with the human being at the centre of our efforts.

On the issue of climate change, a key priority will be safeguarding the human rights of those whose lives are most adversely affected by the Earth's rising temperatures. That challenge can be effectively addressed only through a partnership between developing and developed countries, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

The seventeenth session of the parties to the United Nations Climate Change Conference will be hosted this year in Durban. I would urge world leaders to take strong and urgent action for the protection of the global climate for the sake of present and future generations. I wish Member States successful and fruitful outcomes at those important meetings.

This year, we will also mark the tenth anniversary of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, a vital framework for helping to address poverty and underdevelopment throughout Africa. With the target date for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals on the horizon, and as we face global economic turmoil, improving global governance and finding innovative financing modalities will continue to be on our agenda. As the Secretary-General has said on various occasions, the major groups should come together to solve the global financial crisis. No one can fix this issue alone. The United Nations should be the central forum for discussing the matter.

(*spoke in English*)

I hope that these four areas will provide a framework in which to focus our efforts during this session. There will be, of course, many more issues that we will have to address, including moving forward on the comprehensive convention on international terrorism and strengthening the peacebuilding architecture. During this session, the Assembly will deliberate extensively on sensitive issues related to development, human rights and global safety and security, and will review the scale of assessments for the regular budget. My Office and I will work closely with each subsidiary body to ensure that the intergovernmental process takes into account the broad spectrum of views and that it finds consensual solutions. Also during this session, I will emphasize the need to fully and effectively implement all United Nations declarations and programmes.

This will be an important year for disarmament issues, in particular nuclear disarmament, which remains a prominent and ever more pressing priority for the United Nations. With a notably busy 2012 agenda of meetings on disarmament, including the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty and the review of the Programme of Action to Prevent,

Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, I assure the Assembly that I will consult with all interested parties and will exert all the necessary efforts so that long-awaited, tangible progress is realized in that regard.

On every issue before us, I pledge to find consensus, build partnerships and focus on implementation and real impact. After two decades of experience with the diplomatic corps at the United Nations, I consider members my friends and my family. I will count on their cooperation and support to move the General Assembly agenda forward.

The sands are shifting. We have before us a unique opportunity to shape change and ensure that our next chapter will be safer for the most vulnerable, more prosperous for those in need and kinder to planet Earth. I am humbled by the opportunity to serve the Assembly as President and look forward to our close and successful partnership, working together for the sake of humankind.

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Before calling on representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation in accordance with rule 62 of the rules of procedure, I propose that as we do so we also pay tribute to the memory of the late Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld on the fiftieth anniversary of his death.

I now invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): It is an honour to join the members of the Assembly today in paying tribute to the memory of the late Dag Hammarskjöld, second Secretary-General of the United Nations. Mr. Hammarskjöld, a man of wisdom, embodied the spirit and the goals of the United Nations. He dedicated his life to the service of humankind.

He began his work in 1931, in the civil service of Sweden. In his capacity as the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the early years of its existence, Mr. Hammarskjöld played an important role in shaping the working methods of the United Nations. He strongly believed in preventive diplomacy. He shuttled around the world to personally help in serving the needs of countries, including those that had gained their independence.

He dedicated his efforts to bolstering progress towards the achievement of peace in the Middle East. Mr. Hammarskjöld was the driving force behind the establishment of the first United Nations Emergency Force, which was deployed to monitor acts of violence perpetrated at the Suez Canal. He was behind what are known today as peacekeeping forces.

In addition to his global efforts to create peace, he deeply believed in those who comprised the structure of United Nations forces. Under his leadership, the first statutes were drawn up to identify the responsibilities and functions of the staff of the United Nations and establish their independence as international civil servants. He dedicated his time and effort to setting up what is known as the "Meditation Room", which was designed for people of all faiths and religions.

Mr. Hammarskjöld set the standards of service so that we could work together today to achieve the goals enshrined in his vision, at a time of unprecedented advances in the Arab world, the international financial crisis and a host of natural and man-made disasters. We have to continue working, guided by Mr. Hammarskjöld's vision and strong belief in peace, international cooperation and the universality of the United Nations.

Mr. Hammarskjöld repeatedly said that there is no more satisfying life than that spent working generously and tirelessly in the service of one's country and humankind. Let us all together pay tribute to his memory.

I now give the floor to His Excellency the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: Before I pay tribute to the late Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the Assembly. At this historic time, I am sure the Assembly will benefit from your sound wisdom, your extensive experience and your able leadership. As you know, I deeply value the role of the General Assembly, and I deeply cherish our relations, both official and personal, which have been developed working together over a decade. The theme you have

suggested for this session, "The role of mediation in the settlement of disputes, is very relevant in the current state of the challenges the United Nations is facing. You have my full support and that of the Secretariat in all of your important work.

This is an appropriately solemn opening to our sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Nothing could be more fitting at this tumultuous time than to reflect on the life and death of Dag Hammarskjöld. Today, we remember the example he set, we are inspired by the power of his conviction, and we pledge to carry on the work of the United Nations that he died defending. I think back now to a General Assembly meeting held just two days after he died. Our world was sharply divided then. Debates in this Assembly were polarized. But on that occasion, in this Hall, representatives from around the world spoke with one voice to share their bewildered sense of loss. A collective mourning echoed across the world.

Two years ago, I visited Dag Hammarskjöld's grave in Uppsala. I offered a simple prayer in memory of my hero — that I might be guided by his wisdom as I carry on the mission of the United Nations for which he gave his life.

When I look back on what Dag Hammarskjöld accomplished, I am profoundly aware of our debt to him. From the time of the Suez operation, he was the architect of peacekeeping as we know it today. But in the Congo, the complex operation he designed went even further. It actually had the elements of what we today call peacemaking and peacebuilding. And it was because of the credibility he had already built up as Secretary-General that he was able to persuade Member States to commit to it.

One of the deepest aspects of his conviction was that the United Nations exists not for the major Powers but for the other, smaller, weaker countries, especially at that time the newly independent nations of Africa. He said, "The Organization is first of all their Organization and I deeply believe in the wisdom with which they will be able to use it and guide it." (*A/PV.883, para. 11*)

His words ring as true today. This reason for the United Nations existence was tested recently in Libya and in Côte d'Ivoire. In those cases and others, we stood firmly on the side of democracy, on the side of justice and on the side of the people. And I am especially moved to mark this anniversary just months after the United Nations helped another African country become independent. South Sudan needs our continuing solidarity in the years to come.

Dag Hammarskjöld kept over his fireplace a gift from a mountain climber who had conquered Mount Everest. It was a climber's pick with an eight-word inscription. I am sure he lived by these words. They were: "So you may climb to even greater heights." Hammarskjöld never stopped climbing. He never gave up. His ideals were uncompromising, his accomplishments were magnificent, and his legacy towers over us to this day.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Osman (Sudan): Allow me to add my voice to those who preceded me in congratulating you, Sir, on behalf of the Group of African States, on your well-deserved election. You have the support of your Group. We are sure that, with your perseverance, dedication and resourcefulness, you will lead this house to great success.

On behalf of the African Group, it is my singular honour to address this plenary meeting of the General Assembly to pay tribute to the late Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General of the United Nations, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of his demise. The late Dag Hammarskjöld, the only person to have been awarded a posthumous Nobel Peace Prize, will always be remembered as the greatest statesman who passed away in the line of the most sacred duty to stop bloodshed.

The late Dag Hammarskjöld has gone down in history as the most influential force for peace during his tenure at the helm of the United Nations. He introduced quiet diplomacy and initiated the promotion of preventive diplomacy. His valuable contribution at the inception of the concept of peacekeeping is indelibly imprinted on our consciousness. As a result of that contribution, we managed to mitigate the impact of a crisis which was at that time the most severe in the world. We continue to be inspired by that.

As we gather here today to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the tragic death of Dag

Hammarskjöld, who devoted himself wholeheartedly to the noble work carried out by the United Nations in pursuit of his lofty goals, we must renew our resolve to seek guidance from his legacy.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, who will speak on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group of States.

Mr. Kleib (Indonesia): Mr. President, before paying tribute to Mr. Hammarskjöld, let me first, on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States, congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session. We have full confidence in your ability to guide the Assembly during your presidency. Rest assured that the members of the Asia-Pacific Group stand ready to contribute constructively to the successful outcome of this session of the General Assembly.

On this fiftieth anniversary of the death of the second Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld, I wish to pay tribute, on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, to the memory and service of a dedicated international civil servant and the 15 people who died with him in the horrendous plane crash that took place on 18 September 1961. That plane crash, and the death of Secretary-General Hammarskjöld, represented one of the first major blows to the United Nations as it exercised its peacekeeping responsibilities.

The previous year, 1960, the Security Council had responded to the conflict in the Congo by establishing the United Nations Force in the Congo. The Secretary-General was in Africa in response to an urgent request by the Government of the Congo for urgent military assistance. In a sign of how seriously he took his assignment, Mr. Hammarskjöld was making his fourth trip to the country. He would let nothing stand between him and his commitment to peace. Regrettably, on that terrible day in 1961, his plane crashed only a few miles before it reached Ndola Airport in Northern Rhodesia.

Since that incident 50 years ago, United Nations peacekeeping has grown remarkably. United Nations peacekeeping has been recognized as a global partnership that draws upon the contributions of countries, the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Secretariat.

Today, we remember Mr. Hammarskjöld, all those who died with him, and all those who have died in order that the cause of peace in the world may be served. Today, every heart throughout the world that enjoys peace shall remember Mr. Hammarskjöld and his co-travellers, and the supreme sacrifice that they made in the search for peace. We must ensure that Mr. Hammarskjöld's legacy continues to live on in our collective endeavours towards sustainable peace.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the Deputy Permanent Representative of Romania, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Mihuț (Romania): First of all, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming your position. You can count on our Group's support throughout the entire session.

It a great honour for me to stand before the General Assembly today on behalf of the Eastern European Group to pay a heartfelt tribute to a great man, Dag Hammarskjöld. We are here to remember and honour him. In doing so, we will remember and honour not only a man — an individual — but the universal values he represented and stood for during his splendid career and his abruptly ended life. He encapsulated all the ideal attributes of one serving in the highest office of the United Nations. I will mention here a few of them, which believe to be essential: first of all, integrity — for he refused to give in to external pressure; impeccable professionalism and competence — for he did not hesitate to get involved in the most difficult issues of his day; admirable managerial skills in setting up a modern bureaucratic machinery of unprecedented proportions — such was the United Nations at the dawn of the Organization; and lastly, vision and courage — for he contributed directly to shaping the course of defining events during his tenure.

In addition to all these splendid qualities in a man and a professional, there was a dignified resilience helping him to navigate the troubled waters of the most complicated and enduring issues on the global agenda. He was therefore blessed with a great destiny, but as he himself modestly put it,

> "destiny is something not to be desired and not to be avoided; it is a mystery not contrary to reason, for it implies that the world and the course of human history have meaning".

It is certain that his destiny had meaning for the world and its modern history.

In very few closing words — for words are never enough to honour a great man — we can only say that Dag Hammarskjöld was, is and will remain a benchmark figure and a model for all of us diplomats, United Nations professionals and public servants alike, of what the values of multilateralism and dialogue should be.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Colombia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, may I begin by congratulating you on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session. We offer you our support and wish you every success in your work.

I am honoured to speak at this meeting to pay tribute to Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, who died 50 years ago on 18 September 1961. The Latin American and Caribbean States, many of which were founders of the United Nations, keep very much alive the memory of a man who was Secretary-General at a particularly tumultuous time in world history, when we were still exploring the contours and possibilities of institutionalized multilateral diplomacy.

It is no exaggeration to state that there are few aspects of the work of the Organization on which Hammarskjöld did not leave an enduring mark. In a few days' time, the Security Council will meet to discuss preventive diplomacy, concerning which Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently provided a very sound report (S/2011/552) that not only begins with an epigraph from a speech made by Hammarskjöld in 1954, but also explicitly acknowledges that he was the first to articulate this concept and to breathe life into it as one of the array of instruments available to the United Nations to maintain international peace and security.

The same is true of such fundamental aspects of the functioning of the United Nations as the maintenance of the independence of Secretariat officials, the political role played by the Secretary-General, particularly in using his good offices, the use of special representatives and envoys, the establishment of special political missions to ensure the effective presence of the Organization in the field, the very effective and low-profile quiet diplomacy, and the entire peacekeeping machinery. Indeed, it was Hammarskjöld himself to whom it is attributed the famous expression according to which the legal basis for peacekeeping "falls under Chapter VI and a half of the Charter".

The United Nations was established in 1945, with the fundamental aim of safeguarding future generations from the scourge of war. Dag Hammarskjöld was unwavering in following that path, and half a century later, he is still with us in our task. Hence, we welcome the opportunity to pay tribute today to the memory of he who is rightly remembered as one of the greatest statesmen of the twentieth century — Dag Hammarskjöld.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Monaco, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Ms. Picco (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): The Western European and other States congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency on this first day of work of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, and assures you of their full support.

It is a great honour for me, on behalf of the Western European and other States, to pay tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld, who served our Organization as Secretary-General from 1953 to 1961.

If the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of his passing still evokes the sadness of a man taken away too early in tragic circumstances, it also provides us the opportunity to reaffirm the values that unite us and our Organization's ongoing commitment to their promotion. By embodying himself the very values that he demanded of the actions of the United Nations Organization and of its Secretariat, Mr. Hammarskjöld laid the foundations of an exemplary diplomacy and a global citizenship.

Creator of the concept of peacekeeping, which he based on the principles of impartiality, non-interference and the non-use of force, through the pragmatism that characterized him, he was able to establish the first United Nations Emergency Force.

The Blue Helmets were created at his initiative and out of his determination to protect civilians. The development of peacekeeping operations since then has merely confirmed the central role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security and its ability to adapt to new challenges.

Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld was also a visionary by introducing the theory of preventive diplomacy and the practice of the good offices of the Secretary-General by dispatching Special Representatives to regions in crisis. Such instruments have become crucial in preventing conflicts and in addressing new crises.

Despite of the upheavals of the past 50 years, people's aspirations remain unchanged. One man's mission helped to provide the United Nations with the means to meet their expectations. That is his greatest legacy.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America, who will speak on behalf of the host country.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): Let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session and assure you of the full support of the United States.

Speaking on behalf of the host country, I join colleagues in celebrating the life and legacy of Dag Hammarskjöld, a leader among leaders who helped build and transform the United Nations into the remarkable institution that it is today. It is no coincidence that walking in the neighbourhood surrounding United Nations Headquarters, one will come across Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, as well as a number of buildings that bear his name. Just as he left an indelible mark of influential leadership on the United Nations, Hammarskjöld's name and achievements will be for ever remembered by the people of the United States.

The position of Secretary-General enjoys the great respect and stature that it does today due in large part to Hammarskjöld's reputation as the visionary, yet practical leader. He managed to steer and develop this institution during one of the most challenging eras in world history — the height of the cold war — and personally engaged in efforts to resolve political crises across the globe.

In addition, during his two terms as Secretary-General, Hammarskjöld helped institutionalize many of the tools that remain fundamental to international peace and security today. Those include United Nations peacekeeping missions, multilateral preventive diplomacy and good offices missions to promote direct negotiations between parties in conflict.

During a speech at John Hopkins University in 1955, Hammarskjöld observed that:

> "Politics and diplomacy are no play of will and skill where results are independent of the character of those engaging in the game. Results are determined not by superficial ability but by the consistency of the actors in their efforts and by the validity of their ideals."

Looking back, we reflect on his call for results and see that the robust United Nations of today is the direct result of Hammarskjöld's own personal integrity, commitment and leadership.

Hammarskjöld often referred to his international staff of thousands as the United Nations family. Today, his family celebrates his legacy. Together, we look forward to improving the United Nations to tackle the challenges of the twenty-first century for the good of the community of nations and to better the lives of men, women and children around the world.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Sweden.

Mr. Grunditz (Sweden): Let me first of all join previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr. President, upon your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session. I can assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation.

At the opening of the sixteenth session of the General Assembly on 19 September 1961 — only a day after the tragic plane crash in Ndola — a minute of silence was observed to honour former Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld and those who died with him. It is indeed evocative that we stand here today, half a century later, in the same Hall, paying the same tribute.

On behalf of my Government, I would warmly like to thank you, Mr. President, for that initiative. I also warmly thank the Secretary-General and the

colleagues who spoke before me representing the regional groups and the host country for having so eloquently spoken about my distinguished countryman, who served the United Nations at a pivotal time for the Organization.

As others have testified, Dag Hammarskjöld's legacy still remains relevant to the United Nations and its members. His efforts to assert the independence and integrity of the Organization bore fruit. His work in preventive diplomacy blazed the trail for the Secretary-General's direct diplomatic engagement. His role in the development of United Nations peacekeeping operations, which today is one of the Organization's most important and visible tools, was instrumental. His diplomatic skill and personal qualities — modesty, devotion and neutrality — set an example to all international civil servants to this day.

But Dag Hammarskjöld's legacy remains vibrant also because of its intellectual side — his vision for the United Nations. Hammarskjöld strove for the United Nations to be a dynamic instrument in the hands of its Member States, and understood that the relevance of the Organization lay in its ability to adapt itself to meet new demands. In his view, the Charter should not be worshipped as an immutable document, but be used to address the challenges of the time. This combination of pragmatism and vision — pragmatism as vision — was indeed a defining feature of Hammarskjöld's time in office.

Dag Hammarskjöld once said: "The pursuit of peace and progress, with its trials and its errors, its successes and its setbacks, can never be relaxed and never abandoned". May his legacy and his vision continue to inspire us in our common efforts as we embark on the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): We have heard the last statement in tribute to the memory of the late Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld.

Item 138 of the provisional agenda

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/66/350)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like, in keeping with established practice, to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/66/350, containing a letter from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly, in which he informs the Assembly that six Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I would like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years".

May I therefore take it that the General Assembly takes note of the information contained in document A/66/350?

It was so decided.

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Credentials of representatives to the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly

(a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides that the General Assembly at the beginning of each session shall appoint, on the proposal of the President, a Credentials Committee consisting of nine members.

Accordingly, it is proposed that, for the sixty-sixth session, the Credentials Committee should consist of the following Member States: China, Costa Rica, Egypt, Italy, Maldives, Panama, the Russian Federation, Senegal and the United States of America.

May I take it that these States that I have just mentioned are hereby appointed members of the Credentials Committee?

It was so decided.

Items 7 and 137 of the provisional agenda

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Pattern of conferences

Letter dated 6 September 2011 from the Chair of the Committee on Conferences addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/66/346)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Members are aware that, pursuant to paragraph 7 of section I of resolution 40/243 of 18 December 1985, no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly may meet at United Nations Headquarters during a regular session of the Assembly unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

On the strict understanding that meetings would have to be accommodated within available facilities and services, authorization is thus sought for the following subsidiary organs: the Committee on Relations with the Host Country; the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; the Disarmament Commission; the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; the Independent Audit Advisory Committee; the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court; the second intersessional meeting of the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development; and the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to authorize these subsidiary organs of the Assembly to meet during the main part of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like once again to thank all members. I look forward to their cooperation. May God guide us to success during this important session!

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.